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ABSTRACT

This guide to the core exhibit of the Kentucky History Center (Frankfort) focuses on African American history in the commonwealth of Kentucky. The guide extracts text from seven of the exhibit's chronological areas and lists environments, displays, and other exhibit features to help students understand some of the events that shaped the African American experience in Kentucky. It is not a comprehensive history of African American life in the commonwealth but rather a guide to the African American content in an exhibit that covers 12,000 years of Kentucky economic, social, and cultural history. The guide is divided into three sections: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "Diagram of 'A Kentucky Journey'"; and (3) "Exhibit Guides" (Area C: Kentucky Frontier; Area D: Antebellum Age; Area E: War and Aftermath; Area F: Continuity and Change; Area G: A New Century; Area H: Depression and War; Area I: Many Sides of Kentucky). (BT)

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A Kentucky Journey

African American Heritage

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Teacher's Guide

Kentucky Historical Society

2002

SO 034 931

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Cover: Monk Estill, taken prisoner by Wyandots outside Estill's Station in 1782, convinced the Indians they could not capture the fort. When the settlers overtook the Indians and their captive, Estill helped out by calling to his owner across the lines and later carried a wounded man back to the station. His owner's son later freed him for his brave acts. Illustration from *The History of Kentucky*, a textbook written by Kentucky's Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1901.

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INTRODUCTION

This guide to the core exhibit of the Kentucky History Center focuses on African American history in the commonwealth. It pulls pertinent text from seven of the exhibit's chronological areas and lists environments, displays, and other exhibit features that can help students understand some of the events that shaped the African American experience in Kentucky. This guide is not a comprehensive history of African American life in the commonwealth but rather a guide to the African American content in an exhibit that covers 12,000 years of Kentucky economic, social, and cultural history.

Educators interested in developing tour programs that explore this material further are encouraged to contact the museum education department of the Kentucky Historical Society.

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A KENTUCKY JOURNEY

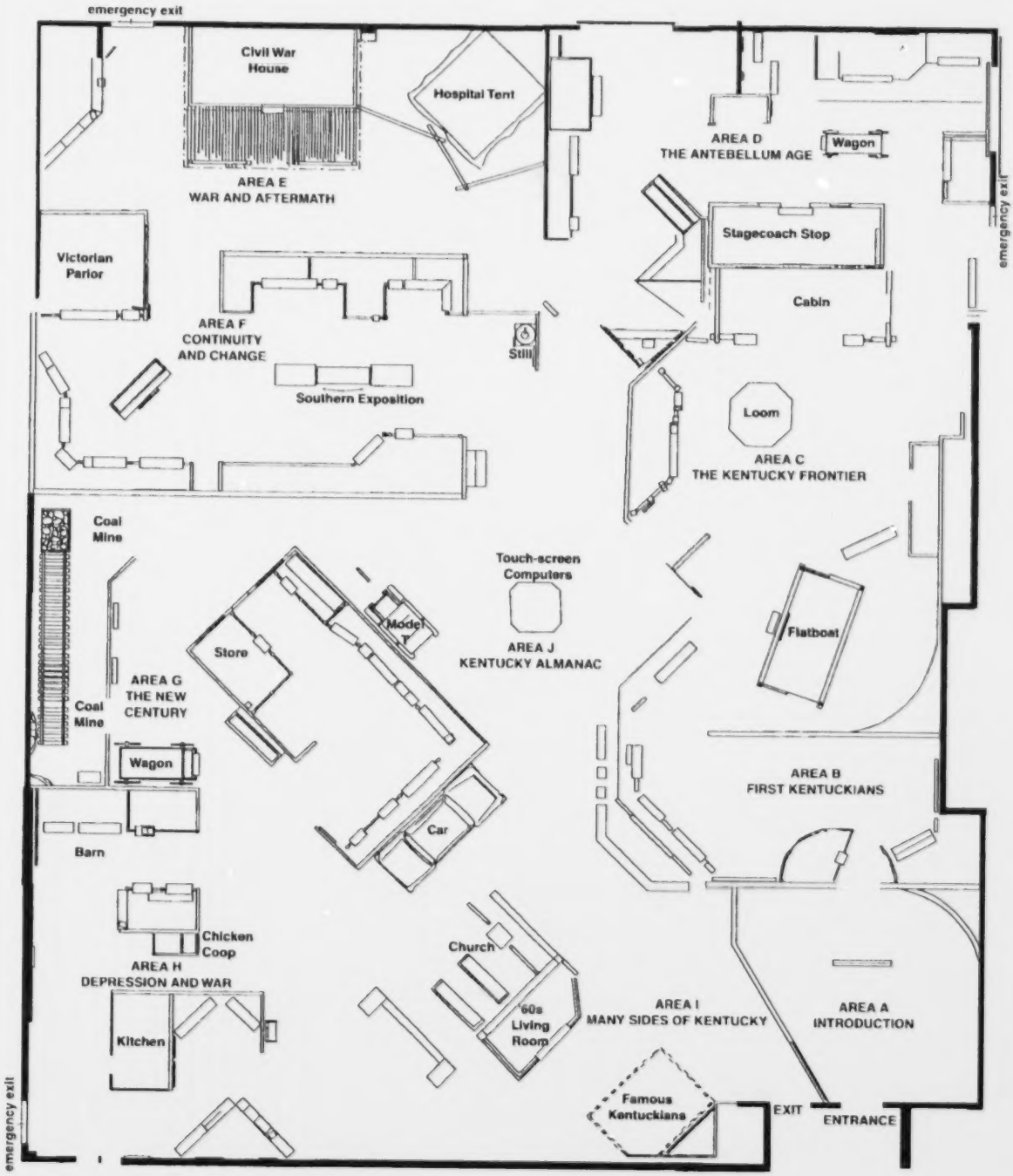

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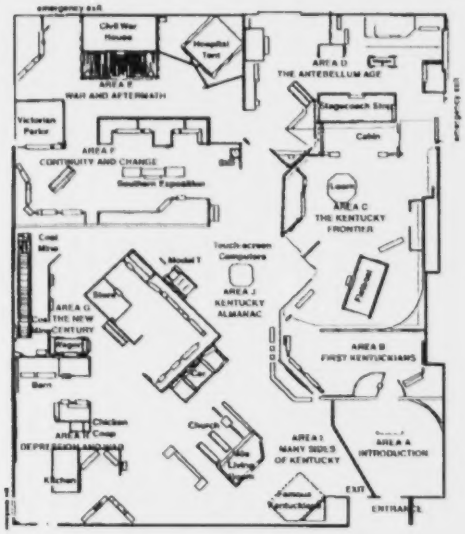
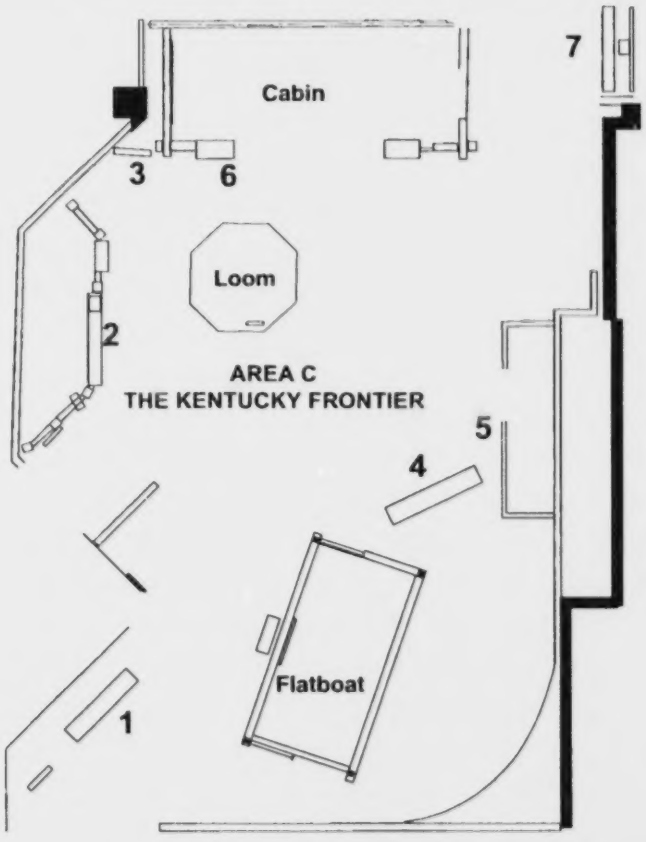
EXHIBIT GUIDE
AREA C: FRONTIER KENTUCKY





OVERVIEW

This area examines the settlement of Kentucky by European and African Americans. Exhibit features include:

- Two buildings, a portion of a flatboat, and a mural representing the boat landing at Limestone
- Displays about exploration, agriculture and domestic life, early towns and commerce, military events, and statehood

BACKGROUND

Dreams of economic gain lured the first Euroamericans over the Appalachians. Buffalo, deer, and beaver attracted hunters and fur traders in the 1760s. In the years that followed, fertile land and the mild climate drew farmers, rich and poor, to Kentucky. The wave of settlement began at Fort Harrod in 1774. By 1800, nearly two hundred forts and stations had been established.

Enslaved African Americans accompanied white explorers, hunters, and settlers to Kentucky. They hiked through the Cumberland Gap and floated down the Ohio River with their masters and worked beside them to clear the land and start farms. Drawn into the escalating conflict with the Native Americans who laid claim to the region, they fought alongside the settlers. In one skirmish, Monk Estill carried a man twenty-five miles to safety. In 1782 the son of his master, Captain James Estill, made Monk the first freed slave in Kentucky history.

By 1790 sixteen percent of Kentucky's population was enslaved African Americans. About one percent of blacks were free. The constitution written when Kentucky became a state in 1792 adopted a slave code similar to that of Virginia's.

RELATED EXHIBIT FEATURES

- A reading rail about early explorers and settlers, including Monk Estill (1)
- A reading rail that includes information about slavery on the frontier (2)
- A flipbook about women on the frontier, including an enslaved African American woman, Molly Logan (3)

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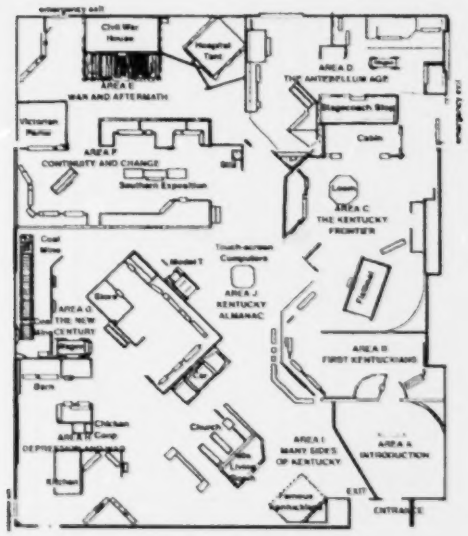
- A reading rail with information about early churches, including Kentucky's first African American church (4)
- A facsimile of an early newspaper that includes a notice about Elizabeth Holland, an runaway servant (5)
- A probate inventory listing the property in an estate that included "two Negro girls" (6)
- A reading rail about Kentucky's struggle for statehood and first constitution (7)

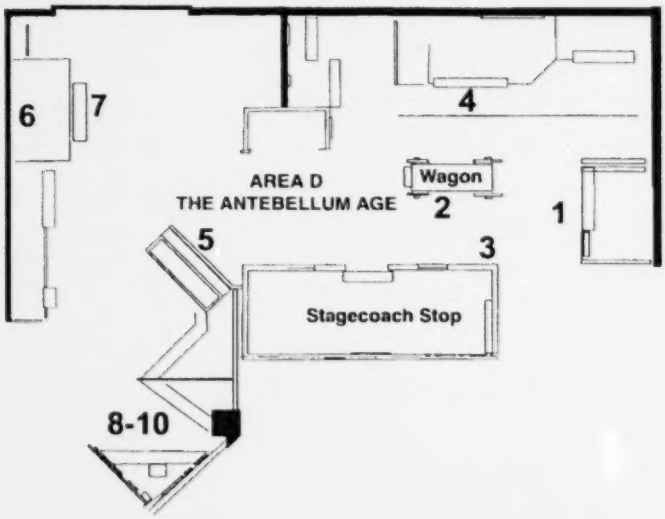
Words from the Past

The [Kentucky] Constitution itself withholds from the legislature the power of abolishing slavery without making a compensation to the proprietors . . . . The laws of this state are the same as Virginia. No laws can protect a slave against the thousand provocations which it is in the power of a petulant master or mistress to offer.

From *The Western Country in 1793* by British clergyman Harry Toulmin

EXHIBIT GUIDE
AREA D: THE ANTEBELLUM AGE





OVERVIEW

This area spans the first half of the nineteenth century, a time of growth and change for Kentucky. Exhibit features include:

- A life-size setting of a stop along a turnpike, including a toll gate, wagon, and tavern interior
- Thematic areas that explore the antebellum economy and early-nineteenth-century society

BACKGROUND

A growing population of free and slave labor boosted Kentucky's economy during the antebellum period. Farms provided most Kentuckians' livelihood. Fertile land supported a variety of crops, and the development of road and river traffic opened national markets. For much of the antebellum age, Kentucky was an agricultural leader. On large farms growing labor-intensive crops like hemp, success depended on the labor of enslaved African Americans.

By 1860 one out of every five Kentuckians was an African American slave. Although some writers have described slavery in Kentucky as "milder" than in the Deep South, slavery was never mild. Living and working conditions varied from master to master, but all slaves were viewed as property. They had no legal rights to citizenship, education, marriage, or property. Strong family and community networks helped slaves to survive the system.

When housing, feeding, and clothing slaves became too costly, owners hired them out or sold them to other Kentuckians or southern slaveholders "down the river." Lexington was the center of Kentucky's slave trade, but auctions scheduled on court day were familiar events in communities throughout the state.

A few slaveholders freed their slaves. Some slaves worked toward buying their freedom, though raising the necessary money was difficult. Making baskets, chairs, or shoes for sale; selling garden produce or small game; or splitting work-for-hire profits with the master were some of the ways slaves could make money. One success story was that of "Free Frank" McWorter, who used earnings from his saltpeter manufacturing operation to buy the freedom of his wife, himself, and eventually, their children.

Enslaved and free African Americans also worked in Kentucky's early manufacturing enterprises. Mills, distilleries, and hemp factories were among the antebellum businesses that converted crops into goods. When Scottish traveler John Melish visited several rope-walks in 1827, he observed "a number of black fellows busily employed." Blacks living in urban areas also did heavy construction and dock work or served as cooks, waiters, and maids in hotels and homes.

Free African Americans had few rights. They worked for low pay and could not join trade unions. They could be arrested for meaningless violations and sold into slavery if they could not pay the fines. And like slaves, they could neither vote nor be tried by a jury. Despite this, free blacks created communities with churches, schools,

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and social and cultural organizations.

The Maysville church founded by Elisha Green was typical of African American churches formed early in the century. With the approval of the white church to which he belonged, Green began holding prayer meetings in a black member's home. His First African Church was one of seventeen independent black churches in Kentucky by the eve of the Civil War.

Related Exhibit Features

- A reading rail about antebellum agriculture, including information about slavery, an illustration of African American farm laborers, a bill of sale for a slave, and a property list including slaves (1)
- A vignette of a farm wagon with a white man in the driver's seat and a black man in the bed of the wagon (2)
- An interactive display of tools representing an enslaved African American who has learned the farrier's trade (3)
- A reading rail about early manufacturing, including a description of a hemp factory that employed slaves and text about "Free Frank" McWorter (4)
- A display panel about antebellum novelists, including William Wells, American's first black novelist, born a slave in Lexington (5)
- Portraits of Dennis and Diademia Doram, a free black couple (6)
- A flipbook of excerpts from the diaries and letters of white women who supervise and, in one case, liberate, slaves (7)
- A display panel about urban workers, including an image and information about free blacks
- A flipbook of first-person accounts written or spoken by former slaves (8)
- A reading rail about religion in antebellum Kentucky, including a Shaker hymnbook open to a hymn written by African American Shaker Eunice Freehart (9)
- A flipbook of first-person accounts about religion in the antebellum era, including details about a black Methodist church in Louisville (10)

Words from the Past

I came here [to Canada] from the State of Kentucky. I was not free born. I didn't feel that any body had a right to me, after I began to think about it. I had a middling good time there—good as the common did. I was learnt the blacksmith's trade there. I worked a very little on the plantation though. There are a great many good mechanics there who never came away. I can't say that I experienced any hard treatment there, but I worked hard, and got nothing for it. I thought that was hard, when I got to be about 22. I had it in my mind long before that age, that I wouldn't stay longer than I was 21 or 22—that I should want to be a man when other men were men, by the age I got a wife—that is what caused me to come away as quick as I did. They carried her off South, to what they called Arkansas Territory. The man who had me tried to get her to keep me, but couldn't do it. I had been living with her as my wife, but her master carried her off with the rest of his slaves. All my children went with her, and I have never seen them since. I went after her once, and got her, but they took her away from me. Canada was not in my head till I lost her completely, and then I thought I would go to Canada. I knew very little about it. I had only heard there was such a place, but what it was, I didn't know. They said it was to the North and was a free country, and so I started for it. When I got to Indiana, a man marked out the course I had to travel, and that was all I knew about it. I had considerable difficulty in getting away. I was not at liberty 24 hours for six weeks.

From an interview conducted with George Ramsey in 1863 by a representative of the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission

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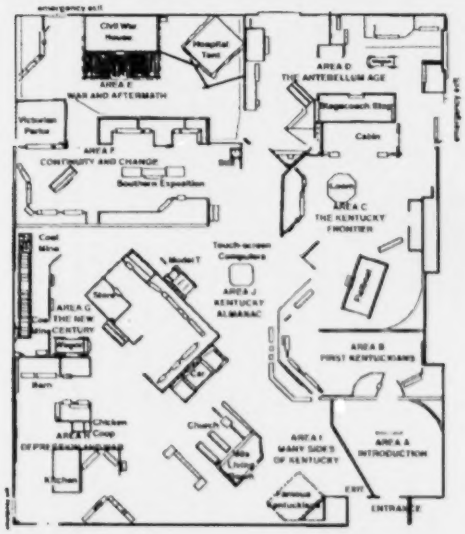
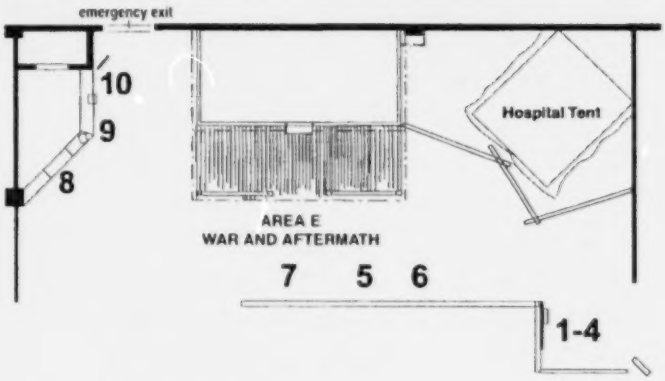
EXHIBIT GUIDE
AREA E: WAR AND AFTERMATH





OVERVIEW

This area examines the causes, events, and results of the Civil War in Kentucky. Exhibit features include:

- A life-size setting representing a field hospital near the Perryville Battlefield
- Thematic areas that explore the causes of the war, its effects on civilians and the state, and Reconstruction

BACKGROUND

Slavery was a key issue in Kentucky's involvement in the Civil War. Since the frontier era, opposition to slavery took many forms among black and white Kentuckians. In the years leading up to the war, antislavery sentiment increased.

From the state's earliest years, slaves had resisted bondage. Some quietly did less work than was expected. Others secretly damaged the master's property. Some faked illness, exaggerated injuries, even resorted to self-mutilation. Escape was another option. Those willing to chance capture and severe punishment could flee to freedom in a northern state or Canada.

Josiah Henson was loyal to his Daviess County owners until 1830, when he was nearly sold. Then he and his family escaped to Canada. There he founded a community for runaway slaves and became a popular abolitionist speaker. It is said that his autobiography influenced Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

The number of actual fugitives remained small, but each success gave hope to others. Often free blacks assisted fugitives. White antislavery allies aided some as well. The people helping runaway slaves were called "conductors" on the "Underground Railroad" to freedom. Other fugitives succeeded in escaping through their own efforts.

Many conductors on the Underground Railroad avoided Kentucky for fear of arrest. Authorities in Mason County arrested Rev. John Mahan, who lived just across the river in Ohio, for enticing slaves to freedom. But they could not prove he had ever set foot in Kentucky, so he could not be convicted. Abolitionist Calvin Fairbank became famous for his daring efforts to rescue slaves. He spent sixteen years in prison as a result.

While several laws protected slaves from the extreme wrath of angry masters, whipping, branding, and mutilation remained common punishments. In some ways the cruelest punishment was breaking up families and selling them "down the river" to harsher working conditions in the Deep South.

White Kentuckians had disagreed about slavery from the state's earliest years. Most slaveholders depended for their livelihood on their unpaid labor force. Even those who opposed human bondage defended slavery as a "necessary evil." Some advocates pointed to the existence of slavery in earlier civilizations and cited Biblical passages such as "slaves, obey your masters." Still others emphasized the right to own property

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guaranteed in the state and federal constitutions.

Opponents offered several solutions. Abolitionists called for the immediate end to slavery. Emancipationsts preferred a gradual transition to freedom. Both suffered verbal and physical attacks for voicing their beliefs.

- **Cassius Clay** was Kentucky's most prominent emancipationist. Rather than opposing slavery, he argued that slaves posed unfair competition to poor whites. His views were moderate, but his violent streak earned him a reputation as a troublemaker.
- **William Shreve Bailey** used his newspaper, *The Newport News,* to argue for abolition. Mobs attacked his offices and he faced threats and lawsuits, but he persisted until 1860, when he traveled to England to raise money for the cause.
- **The Reverend John G. Fee** of Bracken County was the strongest advocate of equality and abolition in antebellum Kentucky. He helped found what became Berea College, the state's major integrated school, and aided black families during the war at Camp Nelson.
- Schoolteacher **Delia Webster** came from New England to Kentucky, where she helped slaves escape. Sentenced to prison for her actions, she was pardoned, but later purchased a farm in Trimble County, where she continued her activities. For that she was known as "the Petticoat Abolitionist."

Some opponents of slavery still believed that freed blacks should not remain in America and supported removal to Liberia in Africa. In spite of the support of Kentuckians such as Henry Clay, Joseph Underwood, and Richard Bibb, the movement had only minimal effect.

Once underway, the war affected all Kentuckians—rich, poor, black, and white. Divided loyalties tore families apart. Perhaps as many as thirty thousand Kentucky soldiers died from battle wounds, accidents, and disease. Although Louisville businesses prospered, farmers lost crops and livestock to both armies.

War offered slaves and freed blacks hope and opportunity. The Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves only in rebel states, not in loyal states such as Kentucky. Even so, it signaled that the end of slavery was now a goal of the war.

From the start slaves left their owners for the protection of the Union army. At first they served only as laborers, but in 1862 President Lincoln authorized the use of black soldiers. By the end of the war, more than 23,000 Kentucky African Americans had entered the Union army—the second-largest number from any state.

Camp Nelson in Jessamine County was Kentucky's chief recruiting and training center for African American soldiers. Over 10,000 Kentucky U. S. Colored Troops passed through the camp, often followed by their families. In November 1864 the army drove 400 women and children out of the camp. Many died of exposure before the army changed its policy and allowed them back inside. Still many blacks considered Camp Nelson a cradle of freedom. When wives and children of black soldiers were finally freed early in 1865, the camp issued more emancipation papers than any other office in Kentucky.

Union victory brought freedom to Kentucky's slaves but did not end their troubles. White Kentuckians showed their opposition to emancipation in many ways. When in 1865 Congress freed black veterans and their families, Kentucky judges declared the law unconstitutional on the grounds that slave marriages were illegal. General John Palmer, the state's federal military commander, used his powers to lift travel restrictions so slaves could walk to freedom. Most Kentuckians opposed his actions.

Three constitutional amendments granted rights to black Americans:

- The 1865 Thirteenth Amendment freed blacks from slavery;
- The 1868 Fourteenth Amendment made former slaves into citizens with full civil rights;
- The 1870 Fifteen Amendment gave black men the right to vote.

Kentucky's General Assembly refused to ratify these amendments. Blacks were denied access to public schools and the right to sit on juries and testify in court.

Other opponents of emancipation resorted to violence. Some joined organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan to terrorize African Americans, filling the nights with beatings, killings, and arson. Other marauding bands, called "Regulators," terrorized rural blacks. These vigilante groups virtually controlled much of central Kentucky. They lynched both blacks and black sympathizers, drove out African American communities, and threatened many more blacks with violence. Over one hundred blacks were lynched between 1867 and 1871.

Yet Kentucky African Americans survived. Strong families and community leaders provided the foundation for freedom. Between 1866 and 1869, the federal

Freedmen's Bureau worked to secure fair treatment of former slaves. Although inadequately funded and staffed, the bureau operated a black hospital, secured fair contracts for blacks, and helped establish ninety-seven schools in Kentucky.

Related Exhibit Features

- A display panel with images, documents, and information about resistance to slavery, including descriptions of Josiah Henson and Calvin Fairbank (1)
- A recording of the words of Isaac Johnson, a Kentucky slave who tried to escape (2)
- A display panel with images and information about the debate over slavery by white Kentuckians (3)
- A flipbook of excerpts from the writings of white Kentuckians who suggested ways to end slavery, including Henry Clay, Cassius Clay, and John G. Fee (4)
- A wall of portrait photographs of Kentuckians who lived in the Civil War years, including several African Americans (5)
- A display unit about African American participation in the Union army, including artifacts, images, information, and an excerpt from a letter written at Camp Nelson (6)
- A flipbook of accounts written during the war by white women, including references to "servants" (7)
- A reading rail about the challenges faced by freed slaves during Reconstruction, including images, documents, and information (8)
- Tools used on Jamestown farm in a settlement deeded to former slaves (9)
- A display about post-war violence toward African Americans, including a Ku Klux Klan robe and an excerpt from a Freedmen's Bureau report on vandalism toward black schools (10)

Words from the Past

I remember the morning I made up my mind to join the United States Army. . . . I told [my comrades] of my determination, and asked all who desired to join my company to roll his coat sleeves above his elbows. . . . I said to them we might as well go; that if we staid at home we would be murdered; that if we joined the army and were slain in battle, we would at least die in fighting for principle and freedom.

Elijah P. Marrs, 12th U. S. Colored Heavy Artillery

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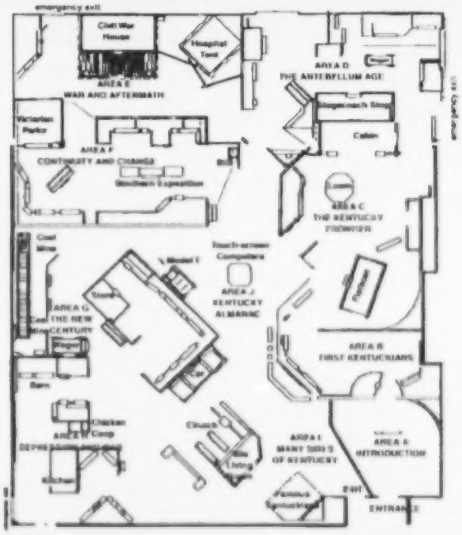
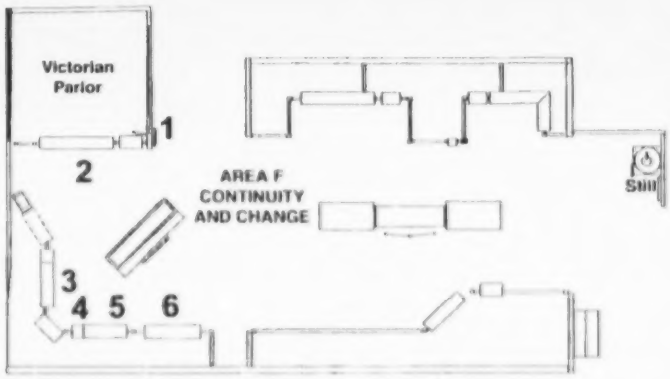
EXHIBIT GUIDE
AREA F: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE





OVERVIEW

This area explores the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a period of great change for the nation but one when many Kentuckians lived as they had for generations. Exhibit features include:

- A life-size setting representing the 1883 Southern Exposition
- A Victorian parlor setting
- Thematic areas that explore industry and agriculture, social life, and the violence that plagued Kentucky into the early twentieth century.

BACKGROUND

The industrial age began slowly in Kentucky. Louisville led the way with the factories, systems of transportation, and public utilities showcased in the Southern Exposition of 1883. In eastern and western Kentucky, coal mining and timbering challenged agriculture as a way of life. Farms began to grow the new burley tobacco and experimented with laborsaving equipment, but most lacked access to new technology.

By 1900, only one of five Kentuckians lived in towns of more than 2,500. It was in these places that people could most easily adopt a Victorian lifestyle. While men worked in offices or factories, their wives reared children and furnished the house with mass-produced goods. Easy access to stores, schools, and cultural activities made for a comfortable lifestyle for those who could afford it. Affluent African American families living in the state's few cities shared this lifestyle.

Unskilled laborers, black and white, earned low wages as servants and factory workers. Substandard housing, poor health care, and limited educational opportunities were the norm among the urban poor. For African Americans segregation made life even more difficult. Schools, interstate railroads, and state health institutions were all segregated by state law. City ordinances excluded blacks from public parks, libraries, and housing. All too often, law-enforcement officers failed to prevent mob rule and lynchings.

The majority of Kentuckians lived in the country, where life centered on work and family. Those with access to towns and railroads adopted new ways when they could afford it. In more remote places, life continued as it had before the Civil War. For most rural people, church and the local store were the main sources of social life outside the home.

Establishing schools was a priority for African Americans during this era. After the Civil War a series of laws established a separate system of schools for blacks. In spite of substandard buildings and equipment, black pupils attended school in record numbers. In 1900, Kentucky's 714 black public-school students and ninety-three graduates led the segregated South.

In 1866 abolitionist John Fee organized Berea Literary Institute as an interracial school for students from kindergarten through college. African American students outnumbered whites every year until 1984 and enjoyed equality in all aspects of campus life. Berea operated as the state's only integrated school

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until the state legislature in 1904 made it unlawful to educate black and white students together.

The state Normal School for Colored Persons opened in Frankfort in 1887 with John H. Jackson as its president. Students could attend for free in exchange for service in the public schools. The college later became Kentucky State University.

Related Exhibit Features

- A scrapbook of Victorian-era photos that shows Kentuckians from all walks of life, including African Americans (1)
- A reading rail about diverse lifestyles in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, including illustrations and information about the status of African Americans in urban and rural Kentucky (2)
- A reading rail about Victorian-era schools, including images and information about Berea, Kentucky State, and other schools for African American students (3)
- A display of artifacts and reading rail about working women, including a photograph of an African American laundress (4)
- A reading rail about Victorian-era sports, including images and information about Isaac Murphy and the importance of black jockeys and the Falls City baseball team (5)
- A flipbook of excerpts from literary works of the era, including a poem by Joseph Seamon Cotter, Kentucky's first recognized black poet (6)

Words from the Past

The Negro's Educational Creed

The Negro simply asks the chance to think,
To wed his thinking unto willing hands,
And thereby prove himself a steadfast link,
In the sure chain of progress through the lands.

He does not ask to loiter and complain
While others turn their life blood into worth.
He holds that his would be the one foul stain
On the escutcheon of this brave old earth.

He does not ask to clog the wheels of State
And write his color on the Nation's Creed,
He asks an humble freedman's estimate,
And time to grow ere he essays to lead.

From *A White Song and a Black One* by African American poet Joseph Seamon Cotter, Kentucky's first recognized black poet

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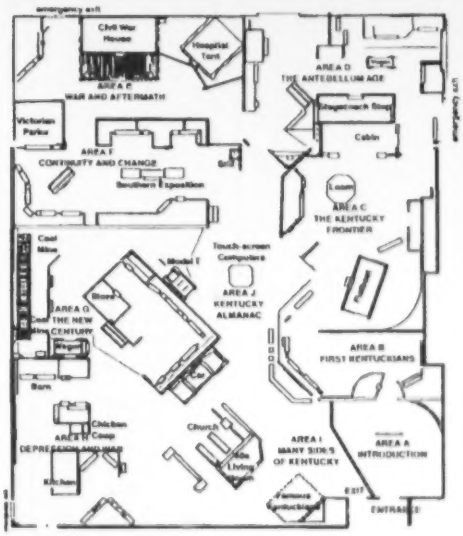
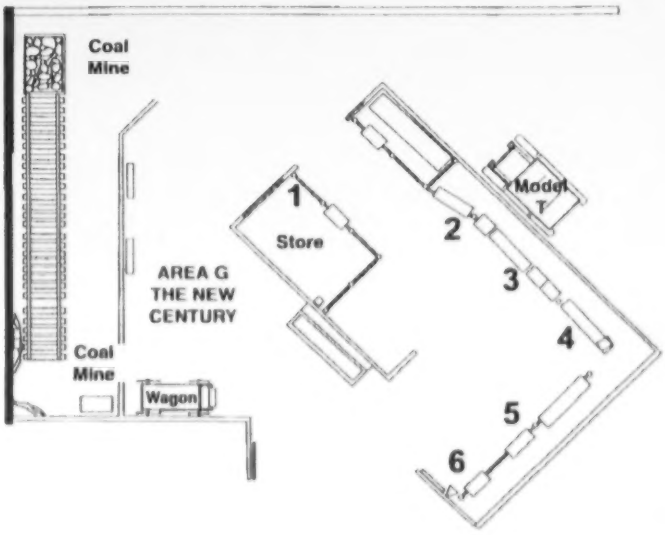
EXHIBIT GUIDE
AREA G: THE NEW CENTURY





OVERVIEW

This area examines changes that took place in Kentucky during the first third of the twentieth century. Exhibit features include:

- A walk-though coal mine
- A life-size setting representing a company store
- Thematic areas that explore coal mining and coal town life; reform movements that affected civil and women's rights, education, and health care; and the "Americanizing" influences of mass merchandising and media on everyday life.

BACKGROUND

Life in Kentucky was increasingly affected by national issues and events during the early twentieth century. Urban areas grew in number and size. The development of the coal industry focused state and national attention on the mountains of eastern Kentucky. Social reformers fought for equal rights, temperance, and improvements in education and health care. Mass communication, gas-powered vehicles, and labor-saving devices were changing traditional ways of life.

Kentuckians shared the idealism of reformers nationwide that social problems could be eliminated by individual and group action. Kentucky women played an important role in the movement for suffrage and temperance. Natives and reformers from outside the state worked to improve education and health care for the poor.

Segregation persisted in turn-of-the-century Kentucky. African Americans were forced to go to separate schools and hospitals, ride in separate railroad cars, and relax in separate parks. Many businesses and organizations refused to admit people of color. Blacks fought back by forming groups that challenged racial discrimination.

Organizations that worked to bring about changes for black people included the Negro Outlook Committee, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the National Urban League. The Louisville NAACP branch, formed in 1914, fought to have a local ordinance segregating housing overturned by the Supreme Court. Lobbying efforts by the Frankfort branch led to a 1920 anti-lynching act.

A number of black Kentuckians worked to gain civil rights for African Americans in the first decades of the new century.

- **Albert Meyzeek**, an outspoken black leader and educator at the turn of the century, worked for the establishment of a black YMCA and campaigned for black library branches.
- **Albert S. White**, an attorney, was nominated for governor by an independent party formed by African Americans.
- **Edward Underwood**, the first black to hold a position on the Kentucky State College Board of Trustees, later established the Frankfort branch of the NAACP and served as its president.

The spirit of reform also touched Kentucky's schools.

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The legislature enacted a law that improved public schools statewide. Reformers worked to increase the adult literacy rate and improve schooling for the disadvantaged and disabled. It was during this period that Rufus Atwood began his tenure as president of Kentucky State University, a position he held from 1929 to 1962. He worked to improve national and state standards for black education.

The first half of the twentieth century saw Kentuckians adopting the trappings of mass culture. Automobiles and mule-drawn wagons shared the streets. Magazines, radio, and movies brought national trends across the state. Across America increasing leisure time led to the growth of professional sports.

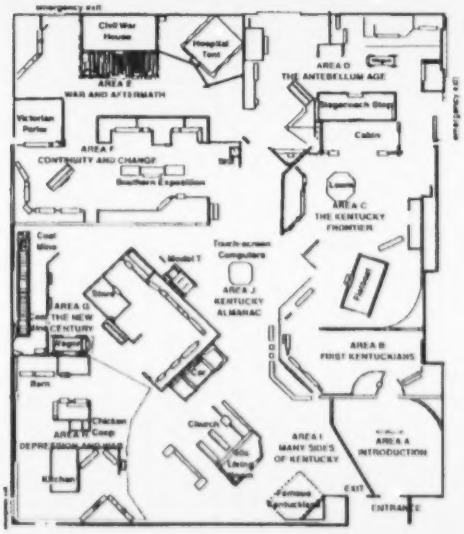
In Kentucky college basketball surpassed baseball and football in popularity by the 1940s, but Kentuckians were involved in baseball—the national pastime—in many ways. African American players, closed out of major league baseball, had their own leagues. Louisville was home to the Negro National League, which included the White Sox, Black Caps, and Buckeyes. From 1945 to 1951 former governor Happy Chandler served as baseball commissioner, playing a key role in racially integrating the major leagues.

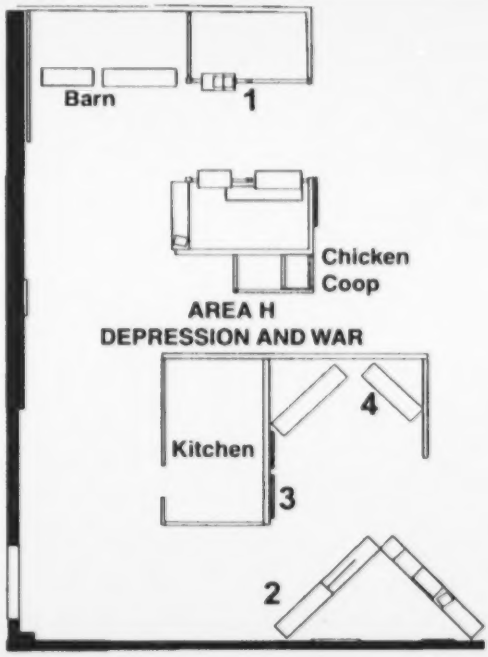
African Americans also played a major role in racing. At the turn of the century, Lexington's William Perkins was perhaps the best-known black trainer. Jockeys like Pike Barnes, Jimmie Winkfield, and John Hathaway could command huge salaries. After the first decade of the twentieth century, black trainers and jockeys were shut out of the sport.

Related Exhibit Features

- A life-size setting of a company store in a Kentucky coal town, including a mannequin of an African American child representing black participation in the coal industry (1)
- A reading rail about Progressive-Era reformers, including biographies of early civil rights leaders in Kentucky (2)
- A display of artifacts associated with health-care reform, including a doctor's bag used by Dr. Joseph Lane, an African American physician in Lexington and Louisville from 1908 through the 1950s (3)
- A reading rail about efforts to improve public and higher education for African American students, including images and information about Berea College and Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute (4)
- A reading rail and flipbook about notable musicians of the era, including Jonah Hones, Lionel Hampton, Helen Humes, and James Ahyln Mundy (5)
- A reading rail about the rise of professional sports, including images and information about the roles of African Americans in horseracing and baseball (6)

EXHIBIT GUIDE
AREA H: DEPRESSION AND WAR





OVERVIEW

This area focuses on the impact of the Depression and World War II on Kentucky. Exhibit features include:

- A walk-through stock barn filled with agricultural tools
- A Depression-era farm kitchen setting
- Thematic areas about the Depression and World War II

BACKGROUND

The Great Depression hit hard in a state suffering from the effects of Prohibition, a declining coal economy, and a decade-long agricultural depression. A 1930 drought devastated many farms, and a 1937 flood damaged dozens of river towns, further slowing the state's recovery. But federal programs resulted in new roads and buildings and economic assistance that benefited city dwellers and farm families alike.

World War II was a watershed for Kentucky. After years of stagnation, the economy boomed as farms and factories produced goods essential to the war effort. Record numbers of enlisted Kentuckians fought all over the world. Those who stayed at home prospered as the war ensured jobs for everyone.

Equipping the troops with food and supplies kept farms and factories busy during the war years. Kentuckians from all walks of life went to work to support the war effort. Although labor shortages forced many employers to hire African Americans for the first time, discrimination continued to plague black Kentuckians. For example, black soldiers guarding German POWs were prohibited from eating in restaurants that served white prisoners.

RELATED EXHIBIT FEATURES

- A reading rail about tobacco farming and industries, including photographs of African Americans (1)
- A reading rail about the impact of World War II on Kentucky, including photographs showing African American participation in the armed forces and wartime industries (2)
- A recording of oral history accounts of Kentucky life during the Depression, including one by African American minister R. L. McFarland (3)
- A reading rail about New Deal politics, including information on the participation of blacks in the Democratic Party and an image of Charles W. Anderson, the first African American elected to a southern legislature in the twentieth century (4)

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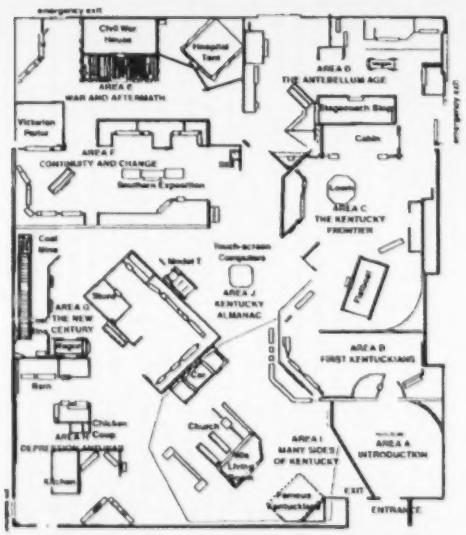
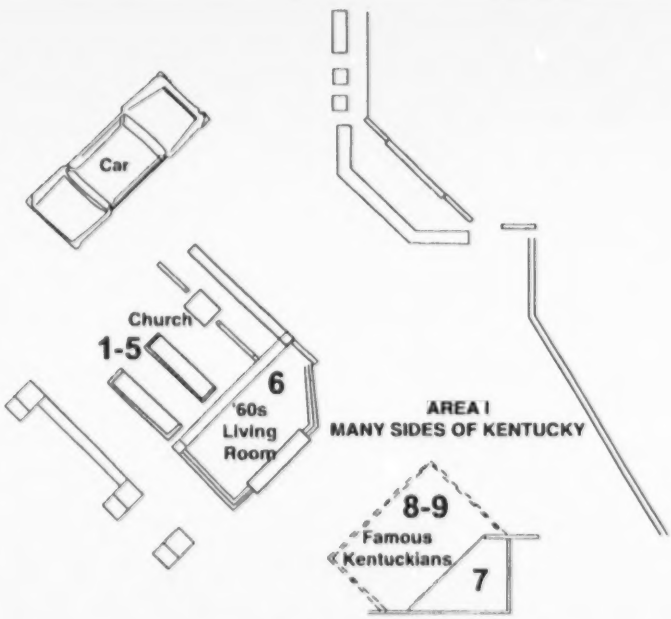
EXHIBIT GUIDE
AREA I: MANY SIDES OF KENTUCKY





OVERVIEW

This area focuses on Kentucky's last fifty years. Exhibit features include:

- A walk-through African American church setting of the Civil Rights era
- A 1960s living room setting
- Thematic areas about the impact of national events and issues in Kentucky, the state's changing economy, and celebrities, from authors to sports heroes

BACKGROUND

In the second half of the twentieth century, social upheavals, a war on poverty, and devastating distant wars jolted both Kentucky and the nation. New industries altered traditional economic patterns. Television, then computers, introduced Kentuckians from all walks of life to new forms of communicating and working.

The 1950s and 1960s ushered in great change for African Americans in Kentucky. In response to long-standing "Jim Crow" laws mandating segregation in many aspects of society, the civil rights movement gained momentum. The result was the passage of numerous pieces of legislation that ensured equal opportunities for all in education, housing, employment, and public accommodations.

Following a 1949 court ruling, Kentucky's state colleges and universities began the process of integration. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed public school segregation nationwide in the landmark *Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision. In spite of resistance, most African American students in Kentucky attended integrated schools by the mid-1960s.

One result of desegregation was that most African American teachers and administrators in formerly all-black schools lost their jobs. Despite the efforts of the Kentucky Council on Human Relations, the ratio of minority teachers to minority students declined significantly between 1956 and 1970.

The 1966 Kentucky Civil Rights Act, supported by Governor Edward T. Breathitt Jr., was stronger in some ways than the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act. Martin Luther King Jr. hailed it as "the strongest and most comprehensive civil rights bill passed by a southern state." The 1968 Kentucky Fair Housing Act also appeared to be a major step toward equality. While many blacks have benefited from increased educational and employment opportunities in the 1980s and 1990s, discrimination still lingers.

In the summer of 1975, Louisville and Jefferson County were ordered to bus students in order to desegregate their school systems by the start of the fall term, which was just weeks away. The two systems were merged and a controversial busing plan

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was implemented. Demonstrations, school boycotts, store looting, and bus vandalism followed. Nearly eight hundred members of the Kentucky National Guard helped quell the riots.

Men and women, black and white, made the civil rights movement a success. Many Kentuckians played important roles in the movement.

- **Charles Anderson**, first elected in 1935 to the Kentucky House, fought for desegregation and equal opportunity for African Americans.
- **Lyman Johnson** was the plaintiff in the 1949 lawsuit that desegregated the University of Kentucky. As the president of the Louisville Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, he also fought for pay equity with white teachers.
- **Georgia Davis Powers** organized the Allied Organization for Civil Rights, which fought for legislation during the 1960s. In 1968 Powers became the first African American woman to be elected to the Kentucky Senate, where she served for more than twenty years.
- **Lucy Harth Smith**, a native of Virginia, was a prominent teacher, school administrator, social activist, and passionate advocate for the teaching of African American history in Kentucky's schools.
- **Charles Tucker**, a Louisville minister, organized nonviolent sit-ins at segregated facilities a decade before this tactic was popularized throughout the South by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.
- **Frederick Vinson**, appointed chief justice of the United States in 1946, believed that racial discrimination had no place in public education. Under his tenure, the court laid the groundwork for *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the landmark 1954 case in which the Supreme Court overturned an 1896 law which had permitted "separate but equal" schools for black and white students.
- **Whitney Young Jr.**, who became director of the National Urban League in 1961, was a forceful advocate for equal housing and education for African Americans. He believed these goals could best be achieved through the political process and nonviolent means.

Although they have made great gains, Kentucky African Americans are still engaged in the struggle for equality begun over a century ago. People of color continue to report the effects of discrimination. Although they made up only 7 percent of the population, one of three black Kentuckians lived in poverty in 1993.

Kentuckians polled in recent surveys expressed their desire for equal access to education, housing, and employment opportunities. Although white males continue to dominate the legislature, the appointment of minorities to state boards and commissions is on the rise. Analysts recommend that Kentuckians strive to develop programs and policies that bridge inequalities and create the climate of diversity the state will need to survive in the twenty-first century.

Related Exhibit Features

- A walk-through church setting representing an African American congregation of the civil rights era (1)
- Recordings of excerpts from speeches and other writings by civil rights advocates (2)
- Reading boards featuring the biographies of Kentuckians active in the civil rights movement (3)
- Text panels with images and information about the civil rights movement in Kentucky (4)
- A "Past to Present" clipboard that explores the status of African Americans in Kentucky society today (5)
- A 1960s living-room setting with a television showing footage from period news programs, including coverage of a visit by Martin Luther King Jr. to Kentucky (6)
- A display of artifacts representing notable Kentuckians of the past fifty years, including a bust and boxing robe from Mohammad Ali (7)
- Spinners featuring photographs and information about famous Kentucky entertainers and sports figures, including Todd Duncan, George Wolfe, Mohammad Ali, and Wesley Unseld (8)
- Recording of excerpts from famous Kentucky musicians, including Lionel Hampton (9)

Words from the Past

Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. Now is the time to end the long night of segregation and discrimination. Now is the time to make it possible for all God's children to walk the earth with self respect and a sense of dignity."

From a speech by Martin Luther King Jr., given at the 1964 march on Frankfort and later printed in the *Louisville Defender*

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